

was the President's statement in subsequent days in Buffalo, New York?

Quoting the President now, Madam Speaker:

"We could give it," referring to the budget surplus, "We could give it," the budget surplus, "all back to you and hope you spend it right, but . . ."

Madam Speaker, that outlines a clear difference between the two major political parties. It is a question of who do we trust? Do we trust the government more to spend our money given the long history of wasteful Washington spending by this overgrown bureaucracy?

Madam Speaker, the majority party and the common-sense conservatives of this country trust the people. That is why we called for broad-based tax relief, so that all American families can save, spend and invest in their own future. It is a major difference. Indeed, Madam Speaker, it is a question of trust.

INTRODUCTION OF GIVE-FANS-A-CHANCE LEGISLATION

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, one of the tenets of a livable community is control over one's own destiny. Unfortunately, sports franchises have held communities hostage, pitting one city against another as they have left fans in Brooklyn, Hartford, Baltimore, Houston and Cleveland for greener pastures. It does not have to be that way.

Madam Speaker, that is why I am introducing Give-Fans-a-Chance legislation which guarantees due process for relocation and makes it at least possible for any city to do what little Green Bay, Wisconsin, has done: basically own their own team. But the NFL will not let that happen any more.

Any league which does not abide by these rules does not deserve the Federal antitrust broadcast exemption worth billions of dollars.

Madam Speaker, I strongly urge giving fans a chance and making their communities a little more livable by providing them with the opportunity to control their own destiny not subject to the whim of some absentee billionaire.

ECONOMIC HEALTH AND NATIONAL SECURITY TIED TO STABILITY OF OUR DOMESTIC PETROLEUM INDUSTRY

(Mr. WATKINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WATKINS. Madam Speaker, I rise to address the House this morning to bring the attention to a grave matter, an economic crisis in the oil patch of this great Nation. I like for my colleagues to realize if there is not changes made within the next four months to five months, we will lose

over 50 percent of our production for marginal wells in the United States of America. Marginal wells produce about 1.3 million barrels a day. How much is that? That is equivalent to what we import from the Arab countries.

But we are about to turn that market over to other foreign sources and put us more dependent, and rest assured, between now and July the 4th, when we have Independence Day, we will be more dependent on foreign governments than ever before in the history of our country. I do not think that is what we want.

Madam Speaker, I call on the Speaker to set up an energy task force, a crisis task force. Also we must have hearings this month, move on this, and also we must establish a national energy policy before our national security is totally at risk.

BRIDGE TO THE 21ST CENTURY MADE OUT OF BANANA PEELS

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Madam Speaker, our Trade Representative said, and I quote:

"We going to the mat."

The trade rep said they will ask the White House to impose strict tariffs and sanctions on European goods over bananas.

That is right, bananas. Think about it. While Uncle Sam is prepared to wage a trade war over bananas, 10,000 steelworkers, 10,000, are receiving unemployment compensation.

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Your workers, my workers, standing in unemployment lines, losing their homes, losing their jobs, and the White House is roaring like a titmouse over bananas.

Beam me up, ladies and gentlemen. What has happened to this country? I yield back all the tanks, submarines, and certainly this new bridge to the 21st Century, that will be made now out of banana peels.

TAX CUTS—THE MAJOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS

(Mr. BALLENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Madam Speaker, it did not take long to find out what the major difference between Democrats and Republicans will be in this Congress: Tax cuts.

Republicans propose a 10 percent across-the-board tax cut, which the legislation of the gentleman from Ohio (Chairman KASICH) will do; and the Democrats, well, you guessed it, general tax relief is nowhere to be found. In fact, the President's budget will contain no middle class tax relief for an-

other 15 years. And we all know what targeted tax cuts are. That is a euphemism for "you won't be getting one."

The current budget surplus, taxpayer overpayment, to be more accurate, should go back to the people that it belongs to in the first place, the taxpayers.

April 15 is not far away, and the tax man cometh. The tax man has been taking too much for too long, and then wasting too much of that for too long. It is time to give the middle class average taxpayers a break. It is time for a tax cut.

STRENGTHENING SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, the Republicans are beginning the 106th Congress exactly where they left off in the 105th, and that is ignoring the will of the majority of the Americans.

If you recall, the Republican leadership in the House ended the 105th Congress by approving an \$80 billion tax break for the wealthiest Americans financed by raiding the Social Security surplus. As a result, the Democrats picked up 5 seats in the November election.

But, believe it or not, the Republicans are still not listening. Instead of directing the surplus to Social Security and Medicare, the Republicans are proposing a 10 percent tax cut which will do virtually nothing for 45 million American families. Under the Republican plan, the average annual tax cut for 60 percent of tax payers would be about \$100. Those earning more than \$300,000 though would receive an average tax cut of \$20,000.

I urge my Republican colleagues to listen to the American people. Read the writing on the wall and stop wasting time with a recycled plan to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy with money that should be used to strengthen Social Security and Medicare.

THE RETURN OF BIG GOVERNMENT

(Mr. EWING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EWING. Madam Speaker, today we gather in this House, we have things pretty good; but sometimes when things are too rosy, we lose track of where we are headed, and maybe what we ought to be looking at.

The surplus is certainly something that we are glad to have, and I think that Members of this body who have supported good policy over the last few years can take credit for that.

But in the President's address, I think something that is so badly needed that was lacking was how are we going to pay off the debt? The President's address should be entitled, "The

Return of Big Government." He declared the era of big government over just a couple of years ago, and now he is back with guns blazing: The return of big government.

We need to save Social Security, we need to reduce the debt, and we need to return to the American taxpayers some of the overpayment they are making.

PUTTING SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE FIRST

(Ms. STABENOW asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. STABENOW. Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge our Republican colleagues to join with us in putting Social Security and Medicare first. We have come together to balance the budget, and we now have an extraordinary opportunity to take the next step in fiscal responsibility and make sure that our children and our grandchildren are protected for the future.

We need to make sure that Social Security and Medicare are protected first, and then we as Democrats will join and in fact lead the fight for tax cuts for middle class families. But, first and foremost, we need to pay down the debt and protect Social Security and Medicare.

We ask our Republican colleagues to join us in this critical, critical issue for the future of our children and our grandchildren.

THE SURPLUS BELONGS TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, I rise in response to the eloquent words of my Democratic colleague to say that yes, we too want very much to put Social Security and Medicare first. In fact, the chairman of our Committee on Ways and Means, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER), has made it clear that he shares the goal of seeing that 62 percent figure, which the President called for in his State of the Union message, to shore up and ensure the strength of Social Security. At the same time, we have an overcharge, and the American people deserve a rebate.

Neither the administration nor Republicans in the Congress anticipated the tremendous flow of revenues that have come into the Federal Treasury as a by-product of the tremendous economic growth which has taken place because of the policies of this Congress and, yes, in working with the President.

But the fact is, the money belongs to the American people and we should do everything that we possibly can to ensure that that overcharge is in fact rebated. But we do share that priority of strengthening Social Security and Medicare, ensuring that we improve

public education, strengthening our national defense capability, and, of course, reducing that tax burden on working families.

PUT SOCIAL SECURITY FIRST

(Mr. WYNN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WYNN. Madam Speaker, I rise this morning to talk about the major problem facing American society, and that is how we deal with our aging population. I believe that the American population wants us to deal with the real problems, and that is Social Security and Medicare, and we must put that first. That is what the Democrats are proposing, that we solve the problem of Social Security first.

Now, on the Republican side of the aisle we have a reincarnation of that old TV show, "Tax Relief for the Rich." How can we figure out a way to give more money to the wealthy?

The public should not be fooled. This is not an across-the-board tax break. Look, if you are in the middle class, the average return that you will see is about \$100. Sixty percent of Americans will only get a tax return of \$100. But if you make over \$300,000, you will get \$20,000.

Who benefits from this so-called tax increase? The very wealthy. And that is the theme that the Republicans have repeatedly put forth: Tax relief for the wealthy, or as I like to call it, Robin Hood in reverse. We should put Social Security first and deal with the real problems of American society.

PROPOSED DEMOCRATIC BUDGET A SHAM

(Mr. SESSIONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, the American public today is once again seeing what I consider to be really a sham and the downside of politics. One year ago, President Clinton said Social Security first, so Republicans matched the President and we said we are going to have a 90/10 plan: Of surplus dollars that would be available, 90 percent to Social Security, 10 percent to tax cuts.

We were beaten up on the floor of this House. "That is not enough. Ten percent to the rich Americans." Now the President, a year later, is saying Social Security now, 62 percent.

We as Republicans and as conservatives are going to match the President. We are trying to work with him. We believe that if that is the figure he is going to select, that is the figure we are going to stick with. And yet what the American public is being told is that Republicans are trying to give tax cuts to the rich. I hope America is listening.

PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS NEEDED

(Mr. GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, we are hearing a lot about bipartisan efforts this year, and I hope that is true. But last year as chairman of the Republican Health Tax Force in the 105th Congress our Speaker produced a bill that was not bipartisan and did not become law because of that purpose. I hope the effort to work on a bipartisan matter on important issues like HMO reform is not a repeat of last year.

I do join my colleagues on the Democratic side saying we need to save Social Security first, but I want to talk about the general issue of bipartisanship.

This year, with the Republican majority even smaller, in part due to their inaction on HMO reform, the time is now to pass those reforms. This year we need to have a Patients' Bill of Rights that protects patients, eliminating the gag clause, providing timely appeals, guaranteeing access to specialists and emergency rooms, allowing doctors determine what is medically necessary, but also, more importantly, making the decision maker for our health care responsible.

Accountability is what we need. If the doctor is not making that decision, then whoever is making that decision needs to be accountable and they need to have the liability.

Let us see how this bill passes, and, if it does not have that accountability, then it is a sham.

WORKING TOGETHER TO SOLVE IMPORTANT PROBLEMS

(Mr. WHITFIELD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WHITFIELD. Madam Speaker, many of us were quite excited about the President's State of the Union message. He pointed out many things that all of us need to be concerned about in addressing.

Our side of the aisle wants very much to save Social Security; so does this side of the aisle. Our side of the aisle wants to strengthen national defense, just as the President does. Our side of the aisle wants to solve Medicare for the long term, just as that side of the aisle does.

So I hope as the 106th Congress begins, that we can work together, not for political gain, but to solve the problems facing the American people.

I think we have a unique opportunity in this Congress to do exactly that, because our side of the aisle agrees with many of the things that the President said. I look forward to the 106th Congress, to help solve some of these very important issues.